

representatives, religious organizations, etc. Furthermore, imposed standards by Canadian NGOs largely removed from direct activities, or extended Canadian law, may not result in the maximized contribution to human sustainable development.

- This raises the issue to what extent Canadian NGOs should be involved in dialogue, and participation in any formal verification, particularly legislated verification, if they are not a key stakeholder where the company is operating? In the majority of cases there are no Canadian NGOs present to serve in such a role, and if they are present are still not likely to be the best stakeholders for this role.
- Canadian companies interviewed feel the best way to determine the maximum balancing of social, economic, and environmental is to work primarily with key stakeholders and experts as NGOs are largely not considered to have the required expertise.

Joint Responsibility and Verification, Versus Looking over the Corporate Shoulder

- Business considers that an expected outcome of stakeholder engagement are decisions that are understood and agreed to as far as possible with key parties, and that involve solutions that allocate tasks and joint responsibilities not just to the corporation but to many or all stakeholders.
- As such, business views these efforts as 'joint ventures' with stakeholders to achieve maximum net-sustainable value added. In accordance, any envisioning of verification systems (legislated or not legislated) would not only have third-parties verifying corporate actions and reporting of those actions, but also of verification systems that demonstrate each of the stakeholders' progress towards their responsibilities (i.e. verify the NGOs or other actors).
- In the case of failure to meet sustainable value goals, this may not be of any fault of the company - emerging frameworks must be able to detect and reflect this. Furthermore, corporations already face vigorous accountability across a wide spectrum of fields.
- Agreement to integrate stakeholders into joint solutions implementation puts a corporation at significant added risk (for example, relying on a local NGO to provide environmental information facts required by law) and involve these groups taking on the same level of accountability as corporations, which must be managed and reflected.

There is instead a need to remain open to, and in particular, to encourage new and innovative ways of developing stakeholder relationships and to support both business and NGOs in these developments. With this in mind, the following recommendations are put forth.

Identify the Gaps in Accountability

Government must clearly communicate to NGOs that in regards to areas where NGOs feel they should be granted or legislated increasing responsibilities (for example, within a verification process) that significant gaps exist in NGO levels of accountability (for example, verification of information shared regarding corporations) and in their levels of